



To: House Committee on Finance
From: Karen Malcolm, Protect Our Healthcare Coalition
Date: April 15, 2021
Re: **SUPPORT Article 12 Sections 4 and 8 – increase Maintenance of Needs Allowance, and rate increases to certain providers**

The Protect Our Healthcare Coalition is a group of leading Rhode Island non-profits and consumer groups with a goal to protect and promote quality, affordable healthcare for all. The Coalition also includes hundreds of community members around the state who support the Coalition's mission.

We believe it is key that Rhode Island do all that it can to increase opportunities for seniors and people with disabilities who need long-term care services to live safely at home or in a more home-like environment and that we must recognize and more adequately compensate the direct care workers who strive every day to provide for the care and safety of seniors and people with disabilities.

Therefore, the Coalition supports Budget Article 12 Section 4 and components related to LTSS, Community Health Workers, and Maintenance of Need in Section 8.

It is truly unconscionable that so many seniors, people with disabilities, and the workers who care for them are forced by existing structures to live in poverty. The effort to increase Maintenance of Need and worker compensation at least for those who work night shifts or have certification in behavioral health contained in Budget Article 12 is critically important to raising these groups' standard of living and is a step towards redressing significant economic injustice, while also helping to improve the standard of care in our communities and nursing facilities.

Increasing the Maintenance of Need Allowance will enable many more to live at home instead of in more costly – and restrictive -- nursing home environments, providing dignity for our seniors and people living with disability. And, increasing pay for direct care workers will improve the quality of care and serve to recognize the essential service these workers provide to the people of our state.

Budget Article 12 Sections 4 and 8 are first steps towards the real change we need to make to raise every Rhode Islander out of poverty and to move forward in building better, more responsive, and more equitable systems of care and employment. We urge passage.

Thank you.

Protect Our Healthcare Coalition partners include: Economic Progress Institute, Mental Health Association RI, RI NOW, RI Parent Information Network, RI Health Center Association, NAACP Providence Branch, United Way of Rhode Island, Planned Parenthood of Southern New England, SEIU Rhode Island Council, Foster Forward, RI Coalition for the Homeless, Rhode Island Working Families Party, Mental Health Recovery Coalition, Oasis Wellness Center, RI Community Food Bank, Substance Use & Mental Health Leadership Council, Rhode Island Coalition for Children and Families, HousingWorks RI, Rhode Island Organizing Project (RIOP), Thundermist Health Center
